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IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

BY JAMES M. BECK

[This "imaginary conversation"—in Landor's style but unhappily without his art—is written in reply to comments in the English press upon my article in the January issue of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, entitled, "The League and America's Good Faith." They contend that the British and French premiers could only deal in the peace negotiations with President Wilson as the American representative. This is true, but in negotiating with him they could have asked that the possible attitude of the Senate should be taken into account. A little less etiquette of diplomacy and a little more courage and candor might have saved the peace of the world from its present wreckage. With this explanation, let the curtain rise upon a scene that might have been enacted upon the stage of this "wide and universal theatre of man."]

Scene: Paris.

Time: January 11, 1919.

Place: Premier's Room, Quai d'Orsay.

(As the curtain rises, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando are seated at council table.)

Orlando (looking at the clock): Our illustrious American colleague is late.

Clemenceau (dryly): He generally is. In that policy no one will question his consistency.

Lloyd George: "Better late than never." His tardy arrival gives us the opportunity to discuss between ourselves the new complication of the active participation of an American President in European conferences. It may destroy the equilibrium of the European polity. This Messianic diplomacy, with its flotilla of ships and a thousand attachés, experts, journalists, photographers and cinema operators, may have rejected Machiavelli, but it is somewhat reminiscent of Barnum.

Clemenceau: We need not quarrel with the methods of the new diplomacy if we can secure quick results. The vital question is one of time. A fear grips me that the work of the sword may be lost in the wordy wrangles of diplomats, old and new. I sometimes wonder whether we could not wisely commit the establishment of peace to Foch and Haig as a Committee of Two "with power." We could then discuss at our leisure the philosophy of government and plan a new charter for the world. For the present, our dead demand of us concrete results, not illusory abstractions.

Orlando: Peace cannot come too soon for Italy. Our distinguished visitor's triumphal tour through my country has not been attended with the best results to the stability of my government. He has appealed to the masses over our heads and already we hear the distant thunder of a coming storm.

Clemenceau: Too much importance need not be attached to these popular ovations. "The shallows murmur; but the depths are dumb." Our enemies were completely deceived by the welcome given in America to Prince Henry. At that time my government was much concerned at the extraordinary receptions given to the Prussian Prince and feared that it marked a pro-German attitude on the part of the United States. Whom the masses applaud one day, they stone the next.

Orlando: That is true, but the present danger remains. In Italy the demonstrations in his honor may shake the foundations of our Government. The times are abnormal and the passions and sufferings of the war have inflamed the minds of men to fever heat. Our great cities are so many powder magazines, to which the match cannot be safely applied. I confess that I would feel safer if the American President, who is a master of phrases, had not come to Europe at this very critical time.

Clemenceau: On the contrary, his coming is the most fortunate of occurrences to us.

Orlando: I fear I do not fully understand your Excellency's meaning.

Clemenceau: Had Mr. Wilson remained in Washington, he would have been the moral dictator of the world. He would have been seated as Caesar in the Flavian amphitheatre. In Paris he is in the arena and cannot escape the dust of conflict.

The President is certainly a remarkable man. No such figure has appeared in European history since the Czar of Russia appeared at the Peace Conference in 1815. Had he remained in Washington he would have had all the advantages of an exceptional position. We should have been compelled to deal with his *fidus Achates*, Col. House, who would not admit that two and two make four without an imperial rescript. When the Texas Talleyrand had secured from us the maximum of benefits for the minimum of concessions, he would have pleaded the necessity of referring the final decision to Washington. Long delay would have resulted, during which President Wilson through his control over the press and the channels of communication and his unrivaled power of suave but obscure statement, could prejudge the public opinion of the world. Inaccessible to any personal contact, he would at the psychological moment descend from the cloudy summit of his Mt. Sinai and deliver to us the tables of the law, with this unhappy difference, that *le bon Dieu* was content with ten commandments, whereas our Moses has already bewildered us with fourteen, and God only knows how many more we may receive before we complete our labors. They say he comes to match wits with us. I am old and my political race is nearly run, but my hand has not altogether lost its cunning. European diplomacy may be old, but it is not yet for America's "thumbs" to pronounce its fate.

Lloyd George: I agree that in coming to Paris Mr. Wilson has staked his all upon the success of his venture. In this lies his weakness. He dare not fail, therefore he must concede. Before sailing from New York, he announced that he went to fight for "the freedom of the seas" and the League of Nations. When your Excellency's reception of the latter project disappointed him, he came to England to seek my aid, and, to test the strength of his purpose, it was suggested that England could more readily accept the League if the issue of the freedom of the seas were eliminated from the deliberations of the Peace Conference. For a short time, he remained silent, and then surprised me by bursting into a hearty laugh. He said that the joke was on him, as it had never previously occurred to him that when the League of Nations was in operation there would no longer be any neutrals; and thus the question of the freedom of the seas was academic.

While I could not share his enthusiasm in the prospect that every little war between nations would automatically become a world war, yet I gladly accepted his happy and naïve solution of a vexed question which vitally concerned my people. Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus was not more sudden or miraculous than his abandonment of his "freedom of the seas."

Clemenceau: But what of France? We prefer the balance of power and the tested offensive and defensive alliance, which won this war. I would as soon defend Paris with a rainbow as France with a League of Nations. A nightmare fills me with a haunting dread that if we follow this *ignis fatuus*, the real victors of the war may yet be Trotsky and Lenin.

Lloyd George: I promised to support him in a league of nations. The remarkable fact that he had no concrete plan made my acceptance less difficult. I have noted in him an invincible repugnance to the concrete. In applying his lofty principles to the realities, he is as luminous as a London fog. Let him have his vision, if we can secure the desired provisions. We can give him a League in name, but have a strong alliance in fact, which will make America the underwriter of the new map of Europe.

Orlando: But will not Mr. Wilson distinguish between the substance and the shadow? Will he accept a plan, which conflicts with his explicit statement at Manchester that the League must be a league of all nations and that within it there can be no special grouping of powers?

Clemenceau: Mr. Wilson seeks prestige, rather than power. Give him all he asks in form, and he may not particularly care whether he gets it in substance. If he is satisfied with the limelight and the press notices, may we not content ourselves with an equitable division of the box office receipts?

Lloyd George: A more difficult problem remains: Will the American Senate also fail to distinguish between form and substance, between reality and shadow?

Clemenceau: That is the crux of the problem. I have some familiarity with the American Constitution. At one time, I had some thought of becoming a citizen of that great country. Our friend, the President, however, is not so fortunate as we who have practically plenary authority over foreign relations. He cannot bind his country, legally

or morally, unless two-thirds of the Senate concur. Besides, Americans have a peculiar aversion to one-man power. They denied it even to their illustrious Founder.

How, then, are we to deal with Mr. Wilson? Two months have passed since the armistice was declared, and the situation has daily grown more menacing. The eclipse of Bolshevism is slowly passing over Europe. Delay is fatal; the times are critical beyond precedent. Can we, then, safely negotiate a treaty with the American President which six months or a year hence the Senate of the United States may refuse to ratify? Should we not ask him, as a matter of common prudence, how far he can guarantee such ratification? Otherwise a year from now all Europe may be on the verge of revolution and the fruits of the war hopelessly sacrificed.

Lloyd George: I appreciate all you say, but without adverting to the peculiar personality of our distinguished visitor, I am at a loss to know how we can inquire into his credentials without giving him mortal offense, and, as you know, he comes not merely as President but as the dispenser of food and credit,—a combination, if I may be jocose, of Pedagogue, Purveyor and Philanthropist, and incidentally banker. Are we in a position to inquire by what authority he speaks?

Clemenceau: Are we in a position not to ask him? President Wilson is not America. The United States will tolerate a dictator in times of war; but never in times of peace. Of that we already have evidence; for, last October, the President appealed to his people to make him, as he said, their "unembarrassed spokesman" by a vote of confidence, and he boldly said that unless they did so, he and we could only regard an adverse verdict as a "repudiation" of his leadership. An election followed and the American people by over a million votes did repudiate our august friend's claims to be an ambassador plenipotentiary of the American people. If we cannot safely ignore President Wilson's limited powers, can we with greater safety ignore the significant warning of the recent American elections?

Orlando: My advice from our Embassy in Washington is that his coming to Europe has been in the teeth of almost universal opposition.

Lloyd George: Nor can we ignore the fact that the

American Senate has now a majority in opposition to the President's administration and that Senator Lodge, the leader of the majority, less than a month ago criticized five of the sacred Fourteen Points and specifically called our attention to the fact that we must reckon with the majority of the Senate. I confess that all this is a mystery to me; for when I appealed to my electorate, if a majority had been returned to Parliament hostile to my administration, I should have resigned.

An impossible alternative confronts us. To please Mr. Wilson is to ignore the American people, who have so recently and emphatically spoken. To ignore Mr. Wilson is to close the only possible approach to an accord with America. What can we do?

Orlando: Italy is in desperate need of coal, oil, cotton and copper. Where are we to get them, except from America, and how can we get them except with President Wilson's goodwill?

Clemenceau: What can we gain, what have we gained, by always yielding to President Wilson? Had we not conceded a modification of the blockade to meet his imperious demands, the war would have ended in 1916. These fatal concessions enabled Germany to prolong the war by the supplies which she received from America through the Scandinavian countries.

What is past is past. I am more concerned about the present situation in Russia, which, to me, is the crux of the peace problem. Unless we can crush Bolshevism, the war may be lost. The time to destroy that serpent is now. President Wilson seems oblivious of the fact that Russia's repudiation of her debt to my Government and the French people, amounting to more than thirty milliards of francs, means an indirect indemnity paid by my unhappy country seven-fold greater than that which she paid to Germany in 1871. Is there no limit to our concessions?

Lloyd George: What you say is tragically true. I recall with the deepest regret that when I had Trotsky at Halifax safely in irons and could have interned him for the period of the war, to please the Washington Government we consented to Trotsky's release. Since then neither God nor man has rested.

Clemenceau: Let us avoid similar errors in the future.

Only a fool is twice burned. Let us generously recognize all that President Wilson has done for the common cause, without forgetting our debt to the dead and our duty to the unborn. I remember the advice of the wise old Roman, Scipio, to Jugurtha, the Numidian prince, to "make friends with Rome, but not with individual Romans". In this spirit, let us have more faith in America and a little less in Mr. Wilson's suave phrases.

(Door opens and Secretary announces: "His Excellency, the President of the United States." Enter Mr. Wilson. The three Premiers arise and shake hands with him.)

Clemenceau: Welcome, Mr. President. Our heartiest congratulations upon your extraordinary receptions in Europe. The oldest of us cannot recall the like for enthusiasm.

Orlando: In my country, Mr. President, the multitudes hail you as a god. Such enthusiasm was never witnessed since Peter the Hermit preached the great Crusade with his "*Deus vult.*"

Lloyd George: Even in our country, Mr. President, although we are colder in temperament than our Latin sisters, you must have appreciated the warmth and cordiality of your reception.

President Wilson: I thank you heartily, gentlemen. The cause was greater than the advocate, and it was the great cause that has won for me the plaudits of your fellow citizens. This should quicken in us a sense of deeper responsibility in the work that we have to do. We have assembled for the purpose of doing very much more than making the present settlements that are necessary. I may say, without straining the point, that we are not the representatives of governments, but representatives of the peoples. It will not suffice to satisfy Government circles anywhere; it is necessary that we should satisfy the opinion of mankind. We are bidden by these people to make a peace which will make them secure. If the Governments do not obey the peoples, the peoples will surely break the Governments. They will not brook any denial of their wish for a league of nations. Statesmen must follow the clarified common thought, or be broken.

Clemenceau: What is this clarified common thought, Mr. President?

Wilson: It is, well, it is—the voices of good men and plain people everywhere.

Clemenceau: But who is the clarifier?

Wilson: They who have seen the great vision.

Clemenceau: But what is the process of clarification? Is it the common organ of democracy,—the ballot box?

Orlando: Recent events in my country make me wonder whether your clarified common thought may not be such emotional excitement as raised Rienzi to power,—only to hurl him down the steps of the Capitol.

Wilson: Your lack of faith surprises me. I pity those who have not seen the vision and heard voices in the air.

Lloyd George: I have a more concrete mandate. My people have recently returned me to power with overwhelming majorities. I trust the recent elections in your country have given you a similar mandate, or was their common thought not sufficiently clarified?

Wilson: Your reference to the recent elections in my country is indelicate. My countrymen have a deep and very genuine ardor for my great vision of a League of Nations.

Clemenceau: True, Mr. President. We may not too curiously inquire into any possible difference between your authority and the will of your people, as expressed at the ballot box; but, by the same token, might it not be well in your public addresses in Europe to put the soft pedal on this constant appeal over the heads of the existing governments to the masses? It only serves to make our task more difficult. After all, the masses can only work their will through governments of their own selection. The contrast that you have drawn in your speeches in England, Italy, and my own country, between existing governments and the masses, as though their wills were at variance, is not calculated to strengthen the stability of these governments or to render them effective for the great purposes that we all have in mind.

Two months have passed since the armistice, and as yet we have made no progress towards peace. Napoleon would have made a peace in half the time.

Wilson: Do I understand that you are charging me with responsibility for this delay?

Clemenceau: Not at all, Mr. President. When we learned that you were about to honor us with a visit, we

rejoiced, not merely in having the great help of your co-operation at the peace table; but because it gave us an opportunity, which we had long desired, to pay a tribute to you and your great country which did so much to make the result a decisive and gratifying one. All this we gratefully appreciate. We are today confronted with the greatest problem that ever confronted any peace conference, and it is to be feared, with the inevitable differences of opinion and disappointments, that, when once the Peace Conference adjourns, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to reconvene it. We therefore think it most important that each of us should be reasonably sure that that which he promises in the name of his country will have binding obligation, and, as these questions cannot be discussed to any advantage in the Peace Conference, it seems the part of candor and sincerity to discuss the question now.

Wilson: Gentlemen, you seem to forget that I am President of the United States.

Clemenceau: No. Mr. President; we have not forgotten it, and we are greatly honored that for the first time in history a President of the United States is here. But we should be faithless to the great interests which are in our keeping if we were blind to the fact that under your Constitution no treaty that you negotiate can have any moral or legal force unless two-thirds of the Senate concur.

Wilson (grimly): You can leave that to me, gentlemen. I shall see to it that the Senate does concur in what I promise, without omitting the crossing of a "t" or the dotting of an "i".

Lloyd George: Under ordinary circumstances, Mr. President, that assurance would be quite satisfactory; but we are further embarrassed by the fact that those who share with your Excellency the responsibility for the making of treaties have already served notice upon us that they do not agree with some of your Excellency's ideas with respect to the nature of the peace and particularly the League of Nations.

Wilson: Who are they that question my authority?

Orlando: Our dispatches from Washington indicate that the leading members of the majority of the Senate, who apparently are in opposition to your administration, have stated that they do not favor all of the Fourteen Points and particularly question the value of the league of nations.

Wilson: Pygmy minds, pygmy minds! You need not concern yourselves with them. They will accept what I bring from Paris, and will know little of what we do, until we have reached an agreement. Before leaving America I took possession of all the cables, and our joint censorship will thus inaugurate the new diplomacy of "open covenants, openly arrived at."

Clemenceau: Your Excellency's assurance is most comforting. Under ordinary circumstances, it is all that we could ask; but it is a matter of life and death to the millions of people whom we represent that there should be no possible mistake. As your Excellency knows, I, for one, have never believed in the League of Nations. There is an old system of alliances which I would not renounce except a better method of defense is offered. If, therefore, we abandon a tried method, which protected France for fifty years and finally saved her in 1914, in favor of the League of Nations, we must know definitely that your country will accept the League. We are therefore naturally concerned in the result of your recent elections in America and the speeches made upon the floor of the Senate by the leaders of the majority.

Wilson (somewhat brusquely): Are you qualified to interpret the recent American elections?

Clemenceau: It is not I, Mr. President, that interprets your mandate from your people. You interpreted it for us; for we read with deep interest your appeal last October to the American electorate, in which you said that "the return of a Republican majority to either House of Congress would certainly be interpreted on the other side of the water as a 'repudiation' " of your leadership. As your people have returned to both houses of Congress large majorities against you, how can we ignore their reply to your appeal, unless we are prepared to assume that America is not a democracy but an autocracy?

Wilson: Enough of this. I am not here to be catechized.

Lloyd George: We are not catechizing, Mr. President. It is, as my confrere of France has said, a matter of life and death to us to know whether, if we concede to America that which you say she asks, America will accept the burdens as well as the benefit of your league of nations. In one of your recent and very eloquent addresses to your countrymen, you well said that "no scruple of taste must

in grim times like these be allowed to stand in the way of speaking the plain truth ". May we not, then, speak plainly?

Wilson (abandoning his angry tone): Gentlemen, you need give yourselves no concern about this point. I have a plan which will defeat my petty enemies in the Senate. I shall so interweave the covenant with the peace treaty that the Senate cannot reject the former without also rejecting the peace treaty, and you will agree that this is inconceivable. Have, therefore, no concern; for I shall "delve one yard beneath their mines and blow them to the moon."

Lloyd George: A very happy Shakespearean quotation, Mr. President, and with our wish for the complete success of your efforts we can only hope that it will not be a case, to continue your quotation, of a very able engineer "hoist with his own petard". Nevertheless, it would be more satisfactory, if in some way we could have something more than your assurance of your ability to defeat your political adversaries, great as our confidence is in your resourcefulness. If I could venture a suggestion, therefore, might I ask whether it would not be practicable for you to bring to Paris some representatives of the majority of the Senate, so that they would be available for consultation at such times and places as your Excellency thought proper; so that, when you and we had agreed upon the essentials of the treaty we could, before announcing them to the world, get their views and thus avoid a possible miscarriage of our great plans?

Wilson: Certainly not. I have managed the affairs of my administration without the co-operation of the leaders of the opposition, and nothing would be more distasteful to me than to have any of them take part, even in a minor capacity, in the coming conference. Your suggestion is impossible.

Clemenceau: Why impossible, Mr. President? We of France, Italy, and England have formed coalition governments, and thus merged the representatives of the various parties into a sacred union. We consult freely with them, and thus we know that we speak the voice of the united country.

Wilson: I will not further discuss the suggestion. It is now too late for me to discuss these questions with men of narrow vision who seek to undermine my influence.

Lloyd George: You know best the problems of your

own government; but would it not be practicable to give the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Senate, as we understand your predecessors have often done under similar circumstances, the tentative plan of your league of nations, so that they can offer any criticism that occurs to them; so that, in default of criticism or objection, we can safely assume that the Senate will ratify any treaty we may formulate?

Wilson: Assuredly not. Your second suggestion is even more objectionable than the first. I do not propose to allow the Committee of Foreign Affairs to know anything until we have reached an agreement. My cable censorship will take care of that. The present session of Congress expires by limitation on the fourth of March. I shall refuse to reconvene the Congress until I am ready to present it with *un fait accompli*. The Senators will then find the Covenant not only in it, but so many threads of the treaty tied to the Covenant that they cannot dissect the treaty from the Covenant without destroying the whole vital structure. Let us drop any further discussion of the question, which concerns me and my country, and not you or your countries.

Orlando: But it does concern us. With Italy, it may be a matter of life or death. I confess, Mr. President, we are all disappointed; for the situation in Europe is growing more critical every hour. Is it a time for false delicacy? Do we not more justly deserve each other's esteem and confidence by speaking our inner thoughts? If we are, in this greatest of all peace conferences, to put an end to the "old diplomacy", against which you have eloquently inveighed, must we not reveal to each other our inner convictions? Otherwise, we will make the world safe—not for democracy—but for hypocrisy.

Lloyd George: Your summary method of disposing of your Senate fills us with wonder and admiration. In English history, there is nothing comparable to it since Cromwell entered the House of Commons, and, pointing to the Mace, said: "Take away that bauble." But will your Senate so readily abdicate its authority? You cannot take reasonable offense, Mr. President, at our natural desire to know whether your demand for a League of Nations is shared by your Senate, whose final concurrence is necessary; for you have not hesitated in your public ad-

dresses to distinguish between our governments and the people whom we are supposed to represent. We cannot recognize your Senate without an undue slight to your great office; but is it not equally true that we cannot give exclusive recognition to your views without the manifest danger of an equal slight to a representative body having at least equal powers with your own in the making of treaties for the United States? With you only can we deal and to you only must we appeal to prevent such a catastrophe as would result from a rejection by the Senate of the United States of the peace treaty that we shall negotiate.

Wilson (rising): Your inquiry, gentlemen, is an affront. It does not comport with my own dignity, or that of my country, that I should permit you to inquire into my credentials. Nothing is left for me but to leave the peace conference. I shall cable for the "George Washington" tonight and return at once to my country.

Orlando (rising in haste): You surely do not mean that, Mr. President. It would be an irreparable calamity, if the United States withdrew from the peace conference, especially after the great expectations which your eloquent speeches have aroused in the masses of Europe.

Lloyd George (rising): There must be some method of meeting so grave a situation without such a disastrous step as you now intimate. We hope that you will reconsider your determination and not take amiss our natural and vital interest in the question that we have discussed.

Clemenceau (who has remained sitting, now arises): Mr. President, your ultimatum surprises us. There is little hope for the peace conference and for the future of mankind if the representative of one of the great nations shall threaten to withdraw from the conference if any inquiry is made as to the full scope of his credentials, or the probable action of his nation. However, my colleagues need have no anxiety. You will not withdraw.

Wilson: Why not? Who will stay me? Freely I came and freely I will depart.

Clemenceau: Freely you did not come, and freely you cannot depart. None of us are free in this great crisis of humanity. All of us are only as the seaweed which floats upon the surface of the Gulf Stream. It indicates the direction of that mighty current. We, too, are floating on

a great and irresistible current of events whose origin and destination, like the Gulf Stream, God only knows. Let us face the situation and be frank with each other in this solemn hour of destiny. We cannot leave this conference without some agreement. You think that you are free to return to your country, your great task undone, but a moment's reflection will convince you that such is not the fact. You and we are bound hand and foot by the force of imperious necessity, which will compel us to remain in Paris until some result is accomplished.

If you left Paris because we made a natural inquiry as to the scope of your credentials you would suffer more than we. From the pedestal to which you have been elevated by the acclaim of uncounted millions of Europeans, your great reputation would be dashed to the ground and broken into a thousand pieces. You cannot leave. The dead forbid you. Visit the desolated regions of the war. There lie the innumerable slain, among whom your noble youth are already numbered. Their tongues are mute and cannot vie in sound with the frenzied plaudits of the living masses who greeted you in London, Paris and Rome. But the dead are eloquent beyond the power of the living, and admonish us, in this fateful hour, that for us to separate on account of petty considerations of personal dignity with our work undone would be to crucify the cause of justice afresh and put it to an open shame.

(President Wilson hesitates for a few minutes, walks the floor in great emotion, and finally resumes his seat with his confrères, who have been awaiting his decision.)

Wilson: Gentlemen, you are right. I dared to come, and no statesman of my country ever made a greater gamble. My worst critic cannot charge me with any lack of courage. I dare not, however, return unless I have accomplished something. I have a high and honorable ambition to shape the peace of the world in one of the greatest moments of history. Do not challenge my authority further. Leave the Senate of the United States to me. They, too, are only bubbles floating upon a swift current of events, and they, too, will feel the imperious force of manifest destiny. I accept the responsibility for their concurrence in what we agree upon.

Clemenceau: This does not solve the difficulty, for even you may be mistaken, but we have at least satisfied our own consciences by bringing this vital matter to your Excellency's attention. As, however, you think otherwise, and for reasons that have commended themselves to your discerning judgment have declined to associate with yourself in Paris the representatives of the Senate, we can only accept your assurances.

Therefore, upon you is the terrible responsibility.

With this understanding, let France, which has little faith in your League of Nations, accept it, because, as you say, America wishes it. God grant that in this there may be no mistake; for if, to please America, we accept the League of Nations in lieu of the more direct and practical protection of an offensive and defensive alliance, and America rejects the League, then our last state is worse than our first, and children yet unborn will rue the fatal error.

Let us face realities and remember the future. If we err now, a year hence you may be a president without a nation or a party, and even drag us down in your fall from power. Indeed, like Samson, you may pull down the Temple of the World's Peace into cureless ruin.

Wilson (after long thought, marked by deep emotion): I am deeply impressed by that which you, my dear colleague, have said. A new light has come to me. The advantage of my coming to Paris has already been demonstrated by this conference, for you have given me a point of view which I lacked when I sat alone in the isolation of the White House, surrounded by flatterers and sycophants, who "crooked the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift might follow fawning."

This is no time for selfish ambition or pride of opinion. The safety of the world is in our keeping, and we must leave nothing undone to bring about a speedy and just peace and the reconstruction of civilization upon a surer foundation.

Recognizing your just concern as to the possible attitude of my constitutional partner in the treaty-making power, I shall at once cable an invitation to Senator Lodge, as Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations; to Senator Hitchcock, the ranking minority member; to my illustrious predecessor, ex-President William H. Taft, who has done so much to promote the League of Nations; and to my distinguished opponent of the last Presidential elec-

tion, former Associate Justice Hughes, and shall ask them to come to Paris as an advisory committee with whom I can confer from time to time as to what America, without respect to divisions of political opinion, fairly asks. That which I shall ask in its name, with the approval of this advisory committee, three of whom are distinguished members of the Republican Party, will undoubtedly be promptly accepted by the Senate.

As I consider all that you, my good confreres and loyal allies, have said, I am further deeply impressed with the truth which my illustrious predecessor, the first President of the United States, said in his Farewell Message to his country. He strongly advised that the permanent foreign policy of the United States should be marked by a disinclination to implicate America, "by artificial ties in the *ordinary* combinations or collisions" of European politics. It is now clear to me that, in representing the United States at the coming conference, I must bear in mind the pregnant distinction which he made between "extraordinary emergencies" which concern all civilization and the "ordinary" affairs of Europe, which are peculiarly its own concern and with which its statesmen are more competent to deal than I can possibly be.

For this reason, I venture to suggest that the peace conference shall first take up the peculiarly local European questions which require adjustment, such as the control of the Adriatic, the frontier protection of France, and all questions of European boundaries. In these, America has no practical interest and its representatives little real knowledge of them. Even my thousand experts who have accompanied me in my formidable peace armada, know less of these matters than one qualified European statesman.

While you, my confreres, are adjusting these peculiarly local concerns, I will pass through your countries bringing a message of good-will from America, and what is far better, practical relief for your starving millions. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right," I will in Lincoln's spirit and with the vast resources of my country bind up the wounds of the world and "care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan." When you have settled these peculiarly European questions, and

the time has come to discuss those of world-wide concern, I shall then, as the chief representative of my great nation, participate in your deliberations, and will make every effort to help in the greatest problem that ever confronted the assembled statesmen of the world. Your Mr. Canning, Mr. Lloyd George, said, in substance, that in the Monroe Doctrine a new world had been called into existence to redress the ill-adjusted balance of the old world. In a larger sense, America, if it abstain from a policy of meddling interference in your local concerns and cooperates with you in the larger problems which concern all civilization, will so adjust the disturbed balance of civilization, that an equilibrium of power with peace and justice may be established, to last, please God, for many centuries. Thus, we will, again to quote the wise and patient Lincoln, "do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace."

(*Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando rise and grasp President Wilson's hands.*)

Clemenceau: In behalf of my colleagues, and anticipating the verdict of Posterity, I acclaim you the acknowledged leader of the liberal forces of mankind.

EPILOGUE:

(Spoken by the Muse of History)

Of all sad words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are these, '*It might have been.*'